



## Debra Brooks

February 17, 1940 - March 28, 2026

Debra Louise (Duty) Brooks, born February 17, 1940, calmly passed into the arms of her Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, on March 28, 2026. Her high school sweetheart and devoted husband of 68 years, Grover Lee Brooks, and her daughter were by her side for her Homegoing.

Debra began her life in Monroe, Michigan, as the first child of a Christian homemaker and a foreman at Newton Steel Works. As a child, she excelled at competitive tennis and horseback riding, the latter ending after an unfortunate accident involving a concussion. Like many children, she was involved with music lessons, learning to play a popular instrument at the time: the accordion. At the age of 15, her mother insisted that she attend the birthday party of a schoolmate, much to Debra's consternation; however, there she met her high school sweetheart, and within two years, she was married. At the tender ages of 17 and 19, she set up their household and began to work as a switchboard operator at Monroe Community Hospital. A twist of turn soon led the young couple, who were expecting their first child, to attend Olivet Nazarene University in Bourbonnais, Illinois, to pursue a career in the Ministry to serve their Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. She was a dynamo of energy and enthusiasm, being a mother as well as resident director, "Dorm Mom, at Chapman Hall filled with Freshman male students. At this time, her focus was on supporting her husband and earning extra money to help him complete his degree. With a toddler in tow, she began sewing her own clothes and taught herself to create intricately tiered, elaborately decorated, wedding cakes for

couples marrying at College Church of the Nazarene. Then the opportunity arose for her to attend Olivet. Trepidatious at first due to her dropping out of high school to get married, she earned her GED and completed her Bachelor's degree in Elementary Education in 2.5 years, earning Summa Cum Laude honors. A natural teacher, Debra further acquired her Master's degree, eventually teaching at a private Catholic school, then in the public school system, the Kankakee County School District, and then as a professor at Olivet, but pro bono to "pay it forward" and further the education of future teachers. As the years progressed, she hosted scores of Olivet students in her home for celebrations and Student Government pizza parties. After moving to South Carolina to be near her family and grandchildren, she returned to teaching at River Ridge Elementary School in Spartanburg. Even a few weeks before her passing, she told her caretakers that she was going back to teach in the classroom, again. Every student fortunate enough to enter her classroom left with a unique experience of being mentored by a master educator who passed on faceted knowledge, coupled with a quick wit and imagination, within the walls of a God-centered and grace-filled classroom where so many students flourished educationally and personally.

After retirement, Debra embraced the opportunity to travel to countries that had long sparked her curiosity. From Italy to China, from the French Polynesian Islands to Russia, she enjoyed taking in the sights and connecting with people. Her most treasured adventure was finding family members left behind in England and Ireland when her branch of the family immigrated to America during the early 1900s. The family continues to have the opportunity to visit with each other on "both sides of the pond," and via social media. Her ambitions and endeavors left yet another legacy of enrichment for her family. Family was always central to her existence. Though her immediate family was small, she loved and cared for her parents through old age, Gerald (Red) and Debra Duty, as well as her youngest granddaughter, Margaret Marie (Alaina) Fisher, and her younger brother Gerald (Jerry) Duty, who predeceased her and who surely have been waiting with great anticipation to be reunited.

Unfortunately, her earthly family, her husband, Grover Lee Brooks, her daughter, Debra (Tammi) Brooks Fisher (Randy), her granddaughter Marissa Fisher Staples (John), her grandson Randall Christian Brooks Fisher (Noelle), her great granddaughters, Sophie and Sydney Staples, her great grandsons Oliver and Winston Fisher, her sister-in-law, Linda Duty, her nephew, Gerald (Scott) Duty (Mariangela), and her great-nieces Leia and Grace Duty, remain to endure her absence and grieve the days of separation until we are all together again.

Her life exemplified Faith in Jesus Christ, Loyalty to her husband, Patience and Commitment to her family, Integrity in her teaching Ministry, and, most importantly, an outpouring of Love always with a radiant smile.

A small graveside service at Graceland East Cemetery, 2206 Woodruff Road in Simpsonville, South Carolina, is scheduled at 10:00 am Saturday, April 4, 2026.

A Celebration of the Life of Debra Brooks is scheduled at The Woodlands at Furman, 1500 Trailhead Court, Greenville, South Carolina 29617, on April 16, 2026, at 3:00-5:00 pm. We hope you can attend to celebrate our amazing wife, mother, grandmother, and great-grandmother.

In lieu of flowers, memorial donations may be made to Olivet Nazarene University online at [olivet.edu/give](http://olivet.edu/give) or by check (memo: "In Memory of Debra Louise Brooks").

Online condolences may be made at [www.thewoodmortuary.com](http://www.thewoodmortuary.com).

# Previous Events

## **Cryptside Service**

APR 4. 10:00 AM (ET)

Graceland East Memorial Park Mausoleum  
2206 Woodruff Road  
Simpsonville, SC 29681

## **Celebration of Life**

APR 16. 3:00 PM - 5:00 PM (ET)

The Woodlands at Furman  
1500 Trailhead Court  
Greenville, SC 29617

# Tribute Wall



“ *Enchanted Cottage was purchased for the family of Debra Brooks.*



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April 05 at 11:38 AM



“ *My wife Gerri and i moved into Keowee Key, Salem, SC in 2007 and moved a few doors down from the Brooks family. At the time it was Grover, Debra and her Mom Debbie. What a delightful, loving family. Grover provided all kinds of neighborly examples of loving your neighbor like walking down the street with a leaf blower ... blowing off the leaves from the drainage areas for many of his neighbors to help prevent water clogs. They hosted many neighborly meals to establish fellowship with others. They were a wonderful loving God fearing couple that loved on Debra's Mom and gave all of us a living example of how to care for aging parents.*

*We have kept in touch over the years and have shared life together via phone and shared many prayers and stories. They will always be remembered as great Godly neighbors.*

*Donald & Gerri Harper*

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**Donalld & Gerri Harper** - April 01 at 01:13 PM